

## **IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY IN READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH GROUP WORK ACTIVITY**

**Denny Pratama, Eusabinus Bunau, Dwi Riyanti**

English Education Study Program Languages and Arts Education Department  
Teacher Training and Education Faculty Tanjungpura University Pontianak

Email: [denztama20@ymail.com](mailto:denztama20@ymail.com)

**Abstrak** : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks naratif. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak tahun akademik 2011/2012. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas. Subjek penelitian ini terdiri atas 30 siswa dari kelas VIIIC. Dalam penelitian ini peneliti bertindak sebagai guru. Data penelitian didapatkan dengan menggunakan teknik penilaian dan observasi dan dianalisa menggunakan ceklis observasi, catatan lapangan dan nilai rata-rata siswa. Ada tiga siklus dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata siswa pada siklus pertama yaitu 60,7, siklus kedua yaitu 63,3, dan pada siklus ketiga yaitu 68,1. Nilai ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa telah berhasil mencapai kriteria ketuntasan minimum (KKM) di sekolah ini yaitu 65. Pada siklus pertama siswa sudah mampu menentukan ide utama. Teknik ini membantu siswa dalam memahami apa yang dimaksud oleh penulis dan bisa mengambil kesimpulan dari teks naratif yang diberikan.

**Kata Kunci** : Pemahaman Bacaan, Kerja Kelompok, Teks Naratif.

**Abstract**: The aim of this research is to improve students' reading comprehension on narrative text. This research was conducted to eighth year students of SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak in academic year 2011/2012. The method of this research is classroom action research. The subject was taken from class VIII C that consisted of 30 students. The researcher acted as the teacher during the research period. The data were collected by using measurement and observation techniques and analyzed by describing the observation checklist, field note, and the students' score. The researcher conducted the research in three cycles. The research findings show that the mean score of students' reading comprehension test in the first cycle is **60.7**, the second cycle is **63.3**, and in the third cycle is **68.1**. It means that students successfully pass the Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum (KKM) in this school that is **65**. This technique helped the students in understanding what the author meant and in drawing the conclusion from the narrative text given to them.

**Keywords**: Reading Comprehension, Group Work, Narrative Text

Reading is one of the basic communicative skills which have very complex process. The process is readers are expected to be able to comprehend what is being discussed, involved in the process of acquiring grammatical structures, vocabularies of language and the meaning. For students, reading is very important in order to improve their ability in mastering English. According to Silberstein (1994:12), "Reading is a complex information processing skill in which the readers interact with text in order to recreate meaningful discourse." Through reading, the students will have more knowledge and experiences. Reading also gives the students a pleasure to enjoy the lesson.

Teaching reading is one of important activities in teaching learning process. The main purpose of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension is an attempt to understand, evaluate, and also recognize the author's ideas of reading text. A reader needs comprehension to catch the content of message or information from the text. According to Anderson (1985: 198), "comprehension is the process by which person understanding the meaning of written or spoken language." It means comprehension is to understand what you read. This is a process of constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

Shaw (1986: 518) says, "the purposes of reading comprehension are to interpret what is read in terms of personal experience analyze and calculate and understand accurate information and ideas." Furthermore, he states that reading comprehension is reading for following: 1). To gain and understand accurate information and ideas. 2). To recognize organization and style. 3). To interpret what is read in term of personal experience. 4). To analyze and evaluate the aspects in reading comprehension

Teaching reading comprehension for English Foreign Language (EFL) is not an easy way to do because the EFL learners do not only use reading technique and strategies, but also their knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar. Nuttal (1982:21) stated that the aim of teaching reading is to develop the students' ability to extract message from text contain. In teaching reading comprehension, the teachers are not trying to put something to the students but to help students to get the information by themselves. Furthermore, Harris and Graham (2007:8) stated that reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to text. Reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types).

According to Silberstein (1994: 20-24), "specific reading comprehension skill could be divided into three levels of skills, they are: 1). Literal reading; The literal level is considered as the easiest level of reading comprehension because a reader is not required to go beyond what the author actually said. The literal level of comprehension is fundamental to all the reading skills at any level because a reader must first understand what the author said before he can draw an inference or make an evaluation. 2). Inferential; Inferences are ideas which a reader receives when he goes beneath the surface to sense relationships, puts facts and ideas together, to draw conclusions and makes generalizations, and detects the mood of

the material. 3). Critical reading; Critical reading requires a higher degree of skill development and perception. Critical reading requires reading with an inquiring mind and with active, creative looking for false statements. It means questioning, comparing, and evaluating.

At school, especially in Junior and Senior High School, reading is one of the standard competences for the students. In School based curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan), one of reading competences which should be learnt by them is: *to comprehend the meaning of short functional texts and essays in the form of narrative, descriptive text, recount and news item in the context of daily life activities and to access knowledge*. This kind of reading competence has even been conducted since the students are at junior high school. In addition, the questions in National Final Examination (Ujian Akhir Nasional) in English subject contain those kinds of texts and the students are absolutely asked to comprehend them.

Based on the researcher's experience when having teaching practice in SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak, he found that the students were still poor in comprehending narrative text. It was proved by their low marks in the class. The researcher found that they were lack in determining the setting, gaining the main ideas, finding the moral values and identifying the generic structures of narrative text.

Narration is the form of writing that is used to tell or relate the story of acts or events, some usually tells about person, place, animal and thing. A good written story let the readers respond to some event in writer's life as if it were their own. They do not only understand the event, but they can almost feel it. As Anderson (1997: 8) states "narrative is a piece of text tells a story and in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener."

To overcome those problems, the researcher conducted a classroom action research to improve the students' ability in reading comprehension of narrative text through group work activity. According to Brown (1980:173) "group work is where the students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self initiated language." Furthermore, Baines et.al (2009:7) said when used well, group work can enhance pupils' learning, motivation and ability to work together, and can encourage children to be less dependent on the teacher by taking more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.

Group Work technique could help the students improve their reading skill especially in reading narrative text. Narrative text is a kind of text that requires the students to have comprehension well. Considering the basic knowledge of the students, the students needed cooperation and competitive situations in order to be able to comprehend a narrative text. Cooperation means the students work together in their group to share their ideas, share their problem and difficulties to other friends in group, and then overcome the problems. Meanwhile competitive means that each group compete with other group. The groups work together and are responsible in the groups' score. Group work is one of the solutions to create these situations. Group work has four basis: heterogeneity, ability, interest and friendship. These basis can affect the interaction between students and also solve the problems of the students.

According to Wynne (2007), there are some benefits of group work, they are: 1) It involves students actively in class. 2) It facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions. 3) It develops communication skills. 4) It promotes team working skills. 5) It develops leadership skills. 6) It demonstrates the value of exchanging ideas. 7) It highlights how to consider more extreme/radical opinions and negotiate for a consensus opinion. 8) It requires students to deal with conflict, or establish ground rules for managing disagreements. 9) It enables students to discuss course content in the specialised language of the subject. 10) It encourages students who may be reticent about presenting their ideas in large group/class situations. 11) It requires students to divide work/task into manageable blocks. 12) It ensures co-operation on the delegation of tasks. 13) It allows students of mixed abilities to work side by side and draw on individual strengths to complete the task.

Based on the standard minimum achievement or *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum (KKM)*, the KKM for reading skill is 65 in SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak. If the students could achieve higher score than the KKM, then they succeeded in that skill.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

How does Group Work activity improve students' ability in reading comprehension of narrative text?

## **METHOD**

### **a. Form of Research**

Since the purpose of this research was to improve students' ability in reading comprehension of narrative text through group work activity to the eight grade Students of SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak on Academic Year 2011/2012, the researcher used classroom action research which was appropriate method to be used to solve the problem of this research.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010:18), the action research process had four main stages which were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The description of those stages can be seen below:

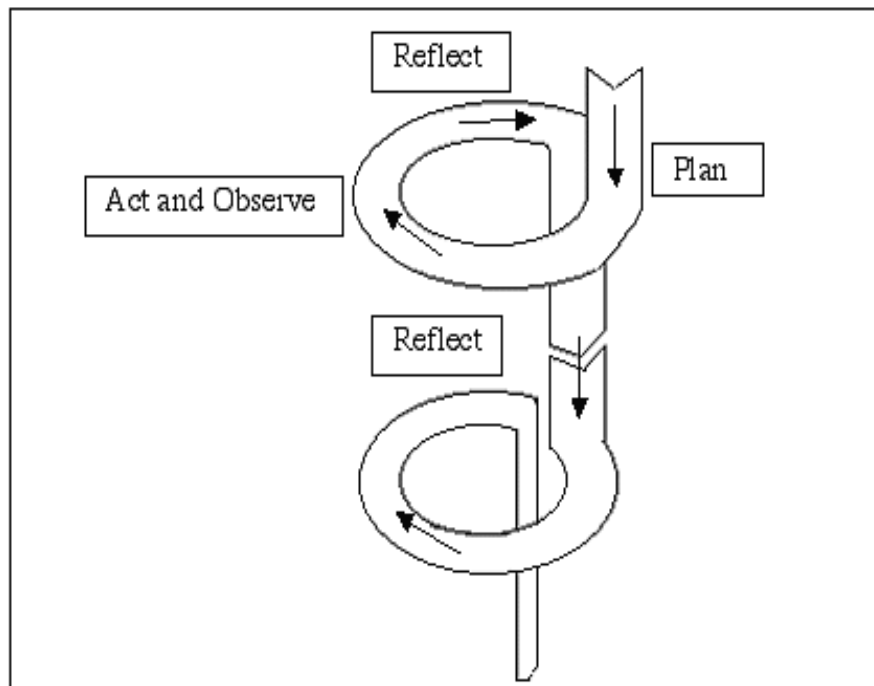


Figure 1: Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) cited in Burns (2010:9)

#### **b. Participant**

The subject of this research was taken from class VIII C that consisted of 30 students.

#### **c. Technique of Collecting Data**

There were two kinds of techniques used by the researcher in collecting the data. They were measurement and observation techniques. To measure the students' achievement, the researcher used multiple choice test items, true-false test items, and matching test. Observation checklist and field note were used for the observation technique. Observation checklist was used to observe students' and teachers' behavior during the research process. It was filled by the collaborator. Field note was used to record the aspect that was not provided in the observation checklist. It was filled by the collaborator whereas the unpredictable things happened during the teaching process.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **a. Findings**

The researcher conducted this research in 3 cycles. During applying the cycles, the researcher and teacher cooperated to record all the process actually happened in the classroom using field notes. The researcher and teacher asked the student to have a group. The group firstly was a small group consists of three students and then after that they form the bigger group consist of the mixing of previous 2 groups. After giving the students' worksheet, the researcher computed the students' total score based on the scoring table and classified the main score into qualification. Both of researcher and teacher reflected students' behavior during

the teaching learning process whether it had been in line with the planning. In addition, collaborator helped the researcher find out what happened in the class to obtain objective data. Those entire steps were done to obtain the research finding.

The researcher computed the students' total score based on the scoring table, and then computed the students' mean score. Then, the researcher elaborated the result of mean score and what was written in the field note in order to achieve the contrast in the research findings. The explanation as follows:

#### ***First cycle (February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012)***

From the research finding and the data analysis on the first cycle of the research, the researcher concluded that it was not satisfying. There were some obstacles happened in this cycle. More efforts would be needed to achieve the goals of the technique applied. The researcher and the observer decided to conduct the second cycle. The reflection of the first cycle was as follows: 1) The students were able to gain the main ideas from the narrative text that they had read. 2) Setting which was in the narrative text still became the difficulties for students in answering the questions. 3) The students seemed confused in finding the moral value from the narrative text. 4) Some of the students were able to identify the generic structures of the narrative text while some others were still in confusion in recognizing the generic structure.

After collecting the students' task, both the teacher and collaborator worked together to compute the individual students score to obtain the students' mean score. The students' meanscore in the first cycle was not really good. it was only 60.7 and it did not achieve the standar minimum score of this school

#### ***Second cycle (February 7<sup>th</sup> 2012)***

In this cycle, it was obtained the students' meanscore was 63.3. It still did not achieve the standard minimum score of this school. After the researcher and the collabolator reflected what was happened in the second cycle, there were some obstacles happened in this cycle. The reflection of the second cycle was as follows: 1) Gaining the main ideas was no problem for the students. They could gainning the main ideas well. 2) The students were able to determine the setting which was in the narrative text. 3) Some of the students were not confused in determining the moral value from the narrative text anymore. 4) Identifying generic structures were still became the difficult question for some students. So, the third cycle had to be conducted in the next meeting.

#### ***Third cycle (February 14<sup>th</sup> 2012)***

In this cycle, the students' meanscore showed a significant improvement. The result was also satisfying, 68.1 it showed the students could achieve the standard minimum score in this school. The researcher and the collabolator concluded that the problems were solved well. The students were not confused in determining the setting, gaining the main ideas, finding the moral values and identifying the generic structures. Their score were also improved. It meant that the cycles could be stopped.

## **b. Discussion**

This research was conducted in three cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages which were planning stage, acting stage, observing stage and reflecting stage. In conducting the research, the writer acted as the teacher who implemented the Group Work technique and for the collaborator, he asked an English teacher to become the collaborator who observed the teaching learning process.

In the first cycle, the students were able to gain the main idea of the narrative text. But the students were still difficult in determining the setting, finding the moral values and identifying the generic structures of narrative text.

In the second cycle, the students faced no problems in gaining the main ideas and in determining the setting of the narrative text. In this cycle, the researcher applied different task to the students. The students had to retell the story from the narrative text that they had read. Then discuss it with the group created from the Group Work technique. But, determining the moral value and identifying generic structures still became the problems for the students in reading a narrative text.

The third cycles, the obstacles could be tackled well. The students were able to determine the moral value and identify the generic structures of the narrative text. The researcher also applied different task to the students so they could be easier in comprehending the narrative text. The task was translation so the students had to translate the narrative text so they could have comprehension more because of the task that they did and also the discussion to the other members of the groups.

Both the teacher and the collaborator worked together to compute the students' individual score and the mean score. The research findings showed that the students' mean score in the first meeting is 60.7. It is qualified "poor to average". It means that the researcher had to think the better preparation for the next cycle. The students' mean score in the second meeting is 63.3. It is qualified "poor to average". In the third meeting, the students' mean score is 68.1. It is qualified "average to good". The percentage of students' achievement of each question was presented as follows: Based on KKM (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum) of English subject is this school, 100% of students passed the indicator of success which is 65.

Furthermore, the result of the observation and field notes can be described as follows:

On the first cycle, the preparation was quite good. The lesson plan made was based on the discussion from both researcher and collaborator. The tools to assist the teaching learning process was narrative text and pictures. Some of the students were active in the groups but some other students were not active. They did not pay attention much to the discussion of the group. The teacher and the collaborator checked the students' answers and compute the individual students score to obtain the students mean score. The result was not good and did not achieve the indicator of success. From the reflection, it could be concluded that the students could gain the main ideas, but they were still difficult in finding moral values, determining the setting and identifying the generic structures.

On the second cycle, in the teaching, teacher gave a different task for the students for the group work. On this meeting the students were asked to retell the narrative text given by the teacher. The students who were not active became

active. The students could gain the main ideas and determine the setting, but they were still difficult in finding moral values, and identifying the generic structures.

On the third cycle, the students were enthusiastic in the groups in this meeting. They participated well in the discussing and evaluating the work. The students played their roles in the groups. They gave opinions and suggestion for their groups. The students showed good improvement and the result was satisfying. The students achieved the indicator of success.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research finding, the researcher concluded that there was an improvement of students' meanscore after applying Group Work Activity technique. This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles with four stages—planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The students kept improving step by step in each cycle until they achieved the standard of minimum score. In the first and second cycle, the students did not achieve the standard minimum score (KKM) in this school. In the first cycle, the students' meanscore was 60.7, 63.3 for the second cycle. Therefore, based on the reflection from the first and second cycle, it was necessary to conduct the third cycle. In the third cycle the indicators of success were fulfilled and the action was stopped. The students' meanscore in this cycle was 68.1.

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